'THE RINGWOOD FIELD NATURALIST' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 37 October, 2013

EDITORIAL: Since earliest times in the study of natural history, knowledgeable and enthusiastic amateurs have contributed significantly to the world's understanding of all aspects of the environment. The careful and systematic observation and recording of information is a critical role played by citizen science. The Club Newsletter has from its inception acted as a repository for reports gathered on excursions and campouts. Club members who attended the 7th FungiMap Conference held at Rawson in May 2013 received firsthand experience and advice on how to sample, collect, describe, identify and preserve species of fungi from the area. This is just one of a range of opportunities for field naturalists to play a part in citizen science projects. With the growth and development of the internet, there are numerous online sites where citizen scientists can contribute their own observations, thereby providing valuable insights and information for the future.

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Leader David Hewitt and Neal Smith emerge from the tunnel on the Mansfield campout March 2013

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

Another very good 12 months has passed with members continuing to enjoy our regular meetings and outings both near and far.

We have had a range of interesting guest speakers on a range of subjects, many of which have left members wanting more or sparking an interest to experience that facet of nature. Some members are using the knowledge gained from meetings to travel around. All of this is thanks to the work of Alison Rogers who works hard to provide this varied program. Again, thanks to members for suggesting various speakers or for offering to provide a short talk to other members.

As always, we enjoy our field outings as well as our weekends away. In particular, members had a great day with Lisa Nink at the 'dinosaur dig' between Inverloch and Cape Paterson. As well, our weekends away, in spring 2012 to Yarram and autumn 2013 to Mansfield, were well appreciated with new country to be explored and nature to be studied. Again thanks to members who organised excursions and the weekends away.

Presentation of images by Club members has continued to improve and has expanded to include small video displays. This is yet another dimension that was not available in the early years but now enables us to observe nature in action. Again, thanks to David Hewitt for his time and patience as projectionist. Also thanks to members who provide these images, it helps to make the meetings.

As said over the years, the Committee members help in the running of the Club and they are thanked for their contributions. A special note of thanks should be made to Lynn Smith who undertook the Secretarial duties again. Unfortunately for us, after many years on the Committee in one role or other, she has decided to have a break and in future just sit and enjoy the meetings without the need to take notes. Thanks Lynn.

Our website was a major innovation about 10 years ago and we still acknowledge Alan Veevers for his hard work in setting this up. Over the last 12 months Jack Airey has taken over and built on the framework provided by Alan, including a gallery of member photos, videos and member reports.

A few other people need to be thanked for their work. To Ray Wall for his work as Treasurer and to Loris Peggie for undertaking again the role of auditor, thank you. Thanks also to Judith Cooke for her time and efforts in preparing our 6 monthly newsletters but, as always, she is looking for more member contribution. Ruth Christensen has again been a great help to Bob Tucker with the library.

My term as President is now over and I thank all who helped over the last 2 years in any capacity.

Peter F Rogers

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

Campout Mansfield – 22-24th March 2013

Leaders: David & Eeva Hewitt

The campout was attended by 25 members, most staying at the High Country Holiday Park. We first met at the Information Centre on Friday afternoon for a short walk along the Mansfield Mullum Wetlands where we saw about 25 water and bush birds – highlighted by a flock of about a dozen yellow-rumped thornbills. This was the first of three days of almost perfect autumn weather.

On Saturday morning we headed towards Mt Buller and spent a bit more than an hour on the Plain Creek Walk which was particularly noted for large numbers of silvereyes feeding on the Mountain Correa (*Correa lawrenciana*) and Prickly Currant-bush (*Coprosma quadrifida*) and a group of Satin Bowerbirds. After morning tea we moved to Fry's Flat in the Howqua Historic Area and walked part-way along the track towards Sheepyard Flat. The clear highlight was a pair of tawny frogmouths in a eucalypt beside the kiln.

Campout Mansfield – 22-24th March 2013 (cont)

After lunch we drove to Sheepyard Flat and some of us did the remaining section of the Fry's Flat-Sheepyard Flat walk. We were very fortunate to get a good sighting of a Wonga Pigeon and to find the only orchid of the weekend – a rosy hyacinth orchid (*Dipodium roseum*). We finished the day's excursion with an inspection of the tunnel at Tunnel Bend – some were actually brave enough to enter the tunnel. We saw a total of 20 birds at Plain Creek and 31 in the Howqua Historic Area. The day finished with a relaxing BBQ in the Holiday Park.

Sunday morning was spent in the Mt Samaria State Park. We were somewhat concerned by reports (from a group of Pajero drivers in the Holiday Park) that the road had been severely damaged by heavy flooding rain on the Thursday before we arrived in Mansfield. We all travelled in 4WDs as a precaution, but the road was in fact in very good condition and provided us with no problems (maybe the Pajero people spent most time on 'blacktop'!). We had morning tea in the Blue Range Picnic Area before heading into the Park where we visited the Rocky Point Lookout, Back Creek Falls and the Kiln Ruin. Again we had a reasonable bird count (25), but unfortunately did not see any lyrebirds. See page 11 for a list of butterflies and moths observed.

The weekend finished with lunch at the Kiln, followed by a short walk towards the tram track. All of us, except the Smiths, drove back towards Mansfield where many stayed in the Picnic ground for more bird observing. Lynn and Neal reported by text that they had seen a lyrebird as they drove northwards in the Park.

Excursion to Murrundindi Reserve 14th April 2013

Leaders Cecily and Reg Falkingham

We set off from the Suspension Bridge for a short walk to the S.E.C. picnic area. The effects of the 2009 fires were immediately obvious, with many dead Eucalypts. This walk was to compare different sections of the Reserve and how it had recovered. The middle canopy and ground covers had made a remarkable recovery.

The bird list slowly grew but it was the fungi that captured everyone's attention - *Psathyrella asperospora* (weeping mary), *Gymnopilus junonius*, *Calocera* sp, *Mycena viscido-cruenta*, and *Coprinus* sp. just to name a few.

At the Water Gauge Camp we saw a bronze-coloured skink lizard shyly peeping out of a rock fissure, a different species from the Common Garden Skink sighted earlier.

After lunch most members walked to the beautiful Cascades to photograph the different fern species. Flame and Scarlet Robins had been promised but none appeared - "you should have been here yesterday" scenario! A Crescent Honeyeater rounded off the bird list to 31 species.

In some of the damp areas we heard the call of the Ewing's tree frog (*Litoria ewingi*) and the leaders had heard a chorus of *Ranidella signifera* (the common froglet) the day before. The Common Brown and the Bank's Brown butterflies and two beautiful moths were seen and photographed during the day.

Our last walk from Bull creek camp to the historic timber bogey revealed evidence of the timber rail tracks still faintly showing just below the soil and leaf litter. The lovely *Gahnia sieberiana* (Red-fruited Saw-sedge) showed off its ruby red seeds.

The last six months of almost no rain to speak of had made its mark on an area already trying to recover from the fierce fires of 2009. In spite of this, nature had provided us with many things to delight in, photograph and enjoy. Misty rain started to fall just as we were leaving after a wonderful day of exploring just some of the trails in this beautiful scenic reserve.

Excursion to Garden of St Erth, Blackwood 19th May 2013

Leader: Les Hanrahan (Ballarat FNC) (Peter and Alison Rogers)

As we set out to explore part of the Whipstick Loop Walk, steep in parts, we were immediately immersed in the damp, luxuriant vegetation of the area and soon numerous fungi species were discovered. As eager photographers attempted to record their finds, Les was kept busy answering questions and he quickly demonstrated his expert knowledge of the species we found. Progress was quite slow as there was such a lot to see in a small area and it seemed no time before we were directed to head back the way we'd come to gather in the picnic area for lunch. Afterwards, we penetrated a little further along the same track and increased our list of species considerably. At the conclusion of a wonderful day, we thanked Les and his assistants for their significant contribution to our knowledge of the fungi of the Wombat State Forest. A few members remaining to the end headed up a side road for afternoon tea and a quick walk to admire the flowering plants before heading home. Judith Cooke

Excursion to Jumping Creek Reserve 16th June 2013

Leaders: Alan and Hazel Veevers

On a fine sunny morning, 20 members and friends assembled at Sandy Bay carpark, where King Parrots and Crimson Rosellas quickly made themselves known. Taking the upstream river track it soon became clear that fungi would play a dominant role in the day's sightings. Many species were seen and photographed, and some would need expert identification after the event. After turning away from the river towards the vehicular track, a Powerful Owl was spotted in a day roost amongst the track-side Tea Trees, providing good opportunities for the careful photographers. Reaching the ridge, White-naped Honeyeaters were seen making the most of early flowering gum-trees whilst Eastern Grey Kangaroos were spooked by our presence. Down a little-used track a search took place for the elusive *Hygrocybe fuhreri* fungus, known only from this area, but despite much excitement none were found. Surprisingly, two timid Deer were spotted on the return journey.

After lunch, most of the group moved to Tindals Wildflower Reserve to look for early orchids. Leaves of several *Pterostylis* sp. were found, with some *P. melagramma* already in flower. Similarly, dense patches of *Acianthus pusillus* leaves had few with a flower. However, the general impression was that a return visit in spring would be amply rewarding.

Excursion to The Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve
13th July 2013 Leader: Judith Cooke

Twenty-five members turned up for our mid-winter excursion near Grantville. Although overcast all day, the weather thankfully remained dry and calm. After morning refreshments, we gathered to learn about the geological, indigenous and European history of the region. We were met by local resident Liz, who accompanied us on our walk. As we entered the reserve, the principal objective of our visit, the Cobra Greenhood (*Pterostylis grandiflora*) was flowering prolifically on both sides of the track. Several other orchid species were observed, including *P melagramma* and *P nutans*, *Chiloglottis reflexa* and *Acianthus pusillus*, as well as several fungi. The common heath (*Epacris impressa*) provided bright splashes of colour. We worked hard for our bird count and as we drove out of the reserve the 18th species was sighted, exceeding the previous list (2009) by one. We proceeded to Liz's home, where we had lunch, followed by time to explore her large property. Additional birds expanded our list while the unexpected appearance of a whipbird foraging in the undergrowth brought everyone running for a look, and provided a suitable climax to an enjoyable and interesting day.

Field Care Day 28th July 2013 - In conjunction with The Osborne Peninsula Landcare Group arranged with Ian & Ann Penrose.

Leader: Alison Rogers

After meeting with Ian in Osborne Road we walked through a local property, out the back gate and along the river track to the selected site. There were 9 members of the Ringwood Field Naturalists in attendance with a similar amount of Osborne members. Quickly we were informed what we would be doing and shown the preferred method of planting and the placing of plant guards.

Our mission was to plant the edge of the river path with native grasses and small shrubs that were indigenous to the area. Although it was a cool and overcast day, we were soon warm with the effort of planting. In no time at all 1000 plants had new homes and were watered in. The whole time we were working we were being serenaded by the local birds, which included yellow-tailed black cockatoos, rainbow lorikeets, crimson rosellas, sulphur-crested cockatoos, corellas, pardalotes, honeyeaters and more. This very enthusiastic local group were extremely grateful for the time and effort that was put in by our Club. A well-earned cup of tea/coffee was provided with yummy homemade goodies to eat, whilst we chatted.

Thanks to members who attended - Judi and Steve Duke, Sandra and Don Redman, Inta and Roger Needham, Alison and Peter Rogers and Jackson Airey.

Excursion to Boomers Reserve – Panton Hill 18th August 2013

Leaders: Steve and Judi Duke

24 members and 2 visitors attended. We were very lucky with the weather, the day was cool and windy but with no rain and the sun peeking through the clouds for most of the day meant we had reasonable conditions.

The morning started well with a variety of birds giving us great views in the carpark. These included Scarlet Robins, Eastern Spinebills, White-throated Tree-creeper, Buff-rumped Thornbills and Golden Whistlers.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS (CONT)

There was a large variety of wildflowers flowering, along with many orchid leaves sprouting throughout the reserve, indicating a good start to a great orchid season. Boomers is well-known as a reliable habitat for orchids, and we were not disappointed, there were many varieties flowering. We were fortunate to see an *Arachnorchis oenochila* (Red-lipped Spider Orchid) in flower, with half a dozen in bud alongside. Other orchids found included, *Pterostylis nutans* (Nodding Greenhood), *Pterostylis melagramma* (Tall Greenhood), *Linguella nana* (Dwarf Greenhood), *Pterostylis pedunculata* (Maroonhood), and a few early *Diuris pardina* (*Diuris maculata*) (Leopard Orchid).

After spending about 2 hours wandering around Boomers we went to St Andrews for lunch and then drove up to One Tree Hill Rd at the top of Mineshaft Road where we spent a short time looking for orchids before the weather changed for the worse.

Total bird count for the day listed 20 species.

NATURE NOTES

Garden of St Erth, Blackwood 19th May 2013 Partial Fungi List	
Agaricus sp	Mycena epipterygia group
Amanita muscaria	Mycena nargun
Calocera sp	Psathyrella sp
Cortinarius sp	Psilocybe sp
Hyphodontia sp	Russula persanguinea
Hypholoma brunneum	Stereum sp
Lactarius eucalypti	Trametes versicolor
Leucopaxillus eucalyptorum	Tremella fuciformis
Lycoperdon sp.	Xeromphalina leonina
Mycena cystidiosa	

Campout Mansfield 22-24th March 2013
Bird Lists

Mansfield-Mullum Wetland	Plain Creek	Howqua Historic Area	Mt Samaria State Park
Blackbird	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike	Crimson Rosella	Blackbird	Brown Thornbill
Brown Thornbill	Eastern Spinebill	Brown Thornbill	Brown Tree-creeper
Eurasian Coot	Golden Whistler (M, F)	Crimson Rosella	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Grey Fantail	Grey Currawong	Galah	Crimson Rosella
Kestrel	Grey Fantail	Grey Fantail	Eastern Spinebill
Little Grebe	King Parrot (F)	Grey Shrike-thrush	Fuscous Whistler
Little Pied Cormorant	Magpie	King Parrot	Gang Gang Cockatoo
Magpie	Pied Currawong	Kite	Golden Whistler (M, F)
Pacific Black Duck	Rufous Whistler	Kookaburra	Grebe
Pied Currawong	Satin Bowerbird (M, F)	Little Pied Cormorant	Grey Fantail
Purple Swamphen	Sitella	Nankeen Night Heron	Grey Shrike-thrush
Raven	Silvereye	Pacific Black Duck	Kookaburra
Red-browed Finch	White-browed Scrub-wren	Spotted Pardalote	Red-browed Finch
Red-rumped Parrot	White-naped Honeyeater	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Scarlet Robin
Red Wattlebird	White-throated Tree-creeper	Yellow Robin	Silvereye
Straw-necked Ibis	Wood Duck	Red-browed Finch	Spotted Pardalote
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Red Wattlebird	Striated Pardalote
Superb Fairy-wren	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Sacred Ibis	White-browed Scrub-wren
Welcome Swallow	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Satin Bowerbird	White-naped Honeyeater
White-faced Heron		Scarlet Robin	White-throated Tree-creeper
White Ibis		Superb Fairy-wren	White-winged Chough
White-throated Tree-creeper		Tawny Frogmouth	Willy Wagtail
Willy Wagtail		Wedge-tail Eagle	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Yellow-rumped Thornbill		Welcome Swallow	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo
		White-browed Scrub-wren	
		White-faced Honeyeater	
		White-throated Tree-creeper	
		Willy Wagtail	
		Wonga Pigeon	
		Wood Duck	

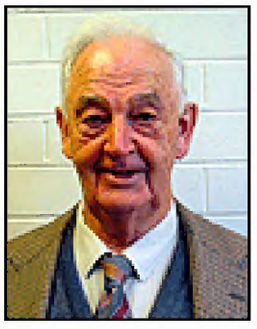
Campout Mansfield 22-24th March 2013	
Moths	**Butterflies**
Chrysolarentia subrectaria	Meadow Argus
Chrysolarentia vicissata	Common Brown
Oenosandra boisduvalii	Banks Brown
Phalaenoides tristifica - Grapevine Moth	Shouldered Brown
Spilosoma glatignyi (deceased)	Cabbage White

Jumping Creek Reserve 16th June 2013 Bird List	
Pacific Black Duck	Red Wattlebird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-naped Honeyeater
Rainbow Lorikeet	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian King Parrot	Golden Whistler
Crimson Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
Eastern Rosella	Grey Butcherbird
Powerful Owl	Australian Magpie
Laughing Kookaburra	Pied Currawong
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Striated Thornbill	Little Raven
Brown Thornbill	Magpie-lark
Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Yellow Robin
White-eared Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Noisy Miner	27 species

The Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve 13th July 2013 Bird List (Jackson Airey)	
Australian Shelduck	White-browed Scrubwren
Maned Duck	Brown Thornbill
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Thornbill
Masked Lapwing	Australasian Magpie
Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-Thrush
Crimson Rosella	Grey Fantail
Eastern Rosella	Magpie-lark
White-throated Treecreeper	Scarlet Robin
Superb Fairywren	Eastern Yellow Robin
Red Wattlebird	Eastern Whipbird
Eastern Spinebill	Pacific Black Duck
Australasian Grebe	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo
Little Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Little Raven	27 species

OBITUARY

Noel William SCHLEIGER, B.Sc, B.Ed. (Geology)
3.10.1926 - 24.04.2013



Noel was a member of this Club since 1989 as well as VicNats and was a significant contributor to the programme, leading excursions and acting as guest speaker. Noel was a committed educator on all areas of Earth Science, raising the profile of geological study amongst children and adults alike.

He was always willing to share his knowledge and passion for geology as well as other topics of natural history with like-minded enthusiasts. His book *Roadside Geology - a Drive of Discovery, a Trip through Time - an Exploration of Landscape and Underlying Geological Structure, Melbourne to Ballarat* is an invaluable guide for those wishing to learn about local geology. Failing health and the recent loss of his partner Dorothy had clouded his later years. The Club expresses its sympathy to members of Noel's family.

Dates for your Diary

- SEANA Weekend Murray River 11-14 October 2013 - Broken Creek FNC
- SEANA Weekend Marysville May 2014 – Upper Goulburn FNC

Ringwood Field Naturalists Club Inc. Reg.No. A 9601 ABN 29099297169
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